



Rurouni Kenshin

SHONEN JUMP MANGA

Story & Art by

Nobuhiro Watsuki

聖
月
参

volume

23

LET'S MAKE EVERYONE HAPPY BY INCREASING MY APPEARANCES!
B

SWEATS ARE GETTING OLD! THESE ARE THE DAYS OF SAMUE!!



和月伸宏

NOBUHIRO WATSUKI



SAMUE

I ACQUIRED A SAMUE (MONK WORK CLOTHES) AS MY EVERYDAY WORK OUTFIT. CONGRATULATIONS!!

A SAMUE HAS BEEN, FOR A LONG TIME, SOMETHING I ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD. I HAVE SECRETLY ADMIRIED THE OUTFIT THINKING, "MAYBE I WILL BE ABLE TO BECOME A CREATOR FULL OF PROFESSIONAL SPIRIT..." AND NOW, MY LONGTIME WISH HAS COME TRUE... HUH!!

COULD IT BE THAT I AM JUST COSPLAYING, WANTING TO "BECOME" A PROFESSIONAL!?

Rurouni Kenshin, which has found fans not only in Japan but around the world, first made its appearance in 1992, as an original short story in *Weekly Shonen Jump Special*. Later rewritten and published as a regular, continuing *Jump* series in 1994, *Rurouni Kenshin* ended serialization in 1999 but continued in popularity, as evidenced by the 2000 publication of *Yahiko no Sakabatô* ("Yahiko's Reversed-Edge Sword") in *Weekly Shonen Jump*. His most current work, *Busô Renkin* ("Armored Alchemist"), began publication in June 2003, also in *Jump*.

RUROUNI KENSIN
VOL. 23: SIN, JUDGMENT, ACCEPTANCE
The SHONEN JUMP Manga Edition

STORY AND ART BY
NOBUHIRO WATSUKI

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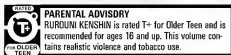
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SHONEN JUMP MANGA

Rurouni Kenshin™

STORY & ART
BY
**NOBUHIRO
WATSUKI**

**MEIJI SWORDSMAN
ROMANTIC STORY**

**Vol. 23: SIN,
JUDGMENT,
ACCEPTANCE**



るるに剣心



仲宏



 **C**
A
S
T 

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ろくろく心
八目無石異

RUROUNI
KENSIN

YATSUME
MUMYŌI

和伸
月宏

FWUP

I'VE
COME TO
INTERROGATE
YOU ON
YOUR TIES
TO "YUKISHIRO
ENISHI"...

IF YOU'VE
BEEN
ALIVE THIS
WHOLE TIME,
WHY WERE
YOU HIDING
FROM US?

YOU...

YOUR
RELATION-
SHIP SEEMS
TO BE THE
WORST
KIND.

...BUT
IT SEEMS
THERE'S NO
NEED TO
ASK.

TMP

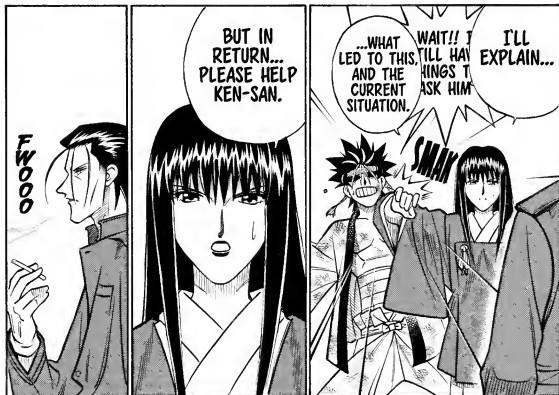
WHAT'S
THIS?!

THIS IS
CON-
VENIENT.

FWOOO

YOU
WERE
ALREADY
IN
BATTLE.







Whoooooo



REQUEST
DENIED.

EXPLAIN
THINGS
QUICKLY.

PICK
UP
YOUR
SWORD!

NOW...

DOOOOOW

WHY
DID YOU,
FROM A
GOLD-
MINING
CLAN...

...THROW
YOURSELF
INTO A
LIFE OF
BATTLE
WITH THE
"YAMI-
NOBU"...?

...THINGS
ARE
BECOMING
CLEARER...

...BUT
THERE
STILL IS
ONE THING
NOT YET
UNDER-
STOOD.

OR
WILL THE
WOMAN
FACE
ME?

A GOLD-
MINING CLAN
CANNOT
SURVIVE
WITHOUT
GOLD.

THE GOLD MINES OF JAPAN—
ONCE CALLED THE GOLDEN
COUNTRY, ZIPANGU—WERE
MINED SO HARD TOWARDS
THE END OF THE EDO PERIOD
THAT HARDLY ANY GOLD
CAME OUT OF THEM ANYMORE.

...WHEN
CIRCUM-
STANCES
CHANGE,
SITUATIONS
CHANGE
ALSO...

THE YATSUME
CLAN DEPENDED
ON "BODY
SHAPING,"
ON ME.

WE NEEDED
TO FIND A
DIFFERENT WAY
TO LIVE.

THE
TOKU-
GAWA
WERE
DEFEATED
BY THE
ISHIN
SHISHI.

BUT I WAS
DEFEATED
BY YOU.

IF I COULD
PROVE
THIS TO THE
TOKUGAWA
SHOGUNATE—

THIS BODY
HAS GREAT
POTENTIAL
FOR
BATTLE.

RISKING
DEATH FROM
STARVATION AND
EXPOSURE, THEY ARE
GAMBLING ON THE
SLIMMEST CHANCE,
SEARCHING FOR GOLD
VEINS IN THE
UNDEVELOPED LANDS
OF HOKKAIDO.

AND
NOW THE
YATSUME CLAN
IS LIKE A
CANDLE LEFT
IN THE
WIND.





...THIS
MAN IS
NOT SIMPLY
OBSESSED
WITH HIS
CLAN'S LAWS.

HE'S TURNED
HIS CLAN'S
MISFORTUNES INTO
A GRUDGE AGAINST
THE ISHIN SHISHI.
AND NOW HE'S
FOCUSING HIS
RAGE ON KENSHIN.



PICK UP
YOUR
SWORD,
BATTŌSAI!!

NOW, MY
STORY
TELLING
IS OVER!



IF YOU
PLAN TO
FIGHT BUT
NOT KILL,
STAND BACK.





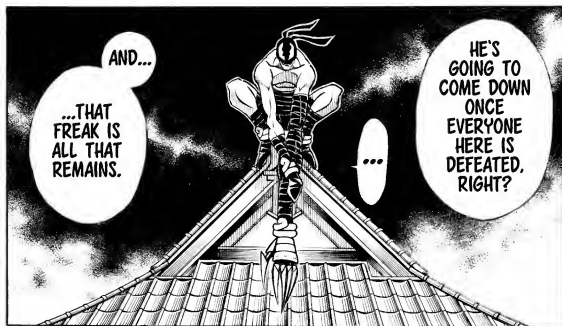
...THAT
WAS YOUR
VOICE...



HEH

YOU
DON'T
SEEM TOO
SURPRISED.





...WHO
ARE
YOU?

I DON'T
WANT YOUR
STALLING TO
WRECK IT
FOR ME.

THIS
COINCIDENCE
IS A
FAVORABLE
ONE.

GRIP

SAITŌ!

TMP

TMP

I DON'T
DESERVE TO
BE SPOKEN
TO LIKE
THAT...
...BY
SOME
FREAK.

TMP

EVEN
BEASTS SENSE
IT WITH
THEIR
INSTINCT.

A HUMAN
BEING REALIZES
WHEN THE
"TIME TO LEAVE"
COMES BECAUSE
OF THEIR
INTELLIGENCE.



**YATSUME
!!**

ME!

**NO
ONE IS
ALLOWED
TO CALL US
FREAKS!!!**

**MY
BODY!!!**

BOOSH

**WATCH THE
POWER OF
YATSUME'S
"BODY
SHAPING"!!!**









AFTER
ALL HE'S
SAID...

...HE'S
GOING TO
HELP KEN-
SAN.

WHATEVER
THE REASON,
KENSXIN WILL BE
ABLE TO FIGHT
ENISHI ONE-ON-ONE,
WITHOUT LOSING ANY
MORE STRENGTH.

MAYBE
HE JUST
WANTS TO
BRAWL
A BIT?

THAT'S
A HUGE
POSSIBILITY.



I'M NO
FREAK.

I AM
ABOVE
HUMAN
BEINGS!!

FEEL
MY
POWER!

BLAH



YES, I
GRADUALLY
SHARPENED
THEM FROM
A YOUNG
AGE...

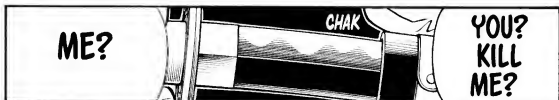
...CEMENT-
ING THEM
WITH BONE
POWDER...

AND THAT
TONGUE?

THIS
IS MY
OWN.

THOSE
FANGS...

ARE
THEY ALSO
FROM BODY
SHAPING?



Rurouni Kenshin



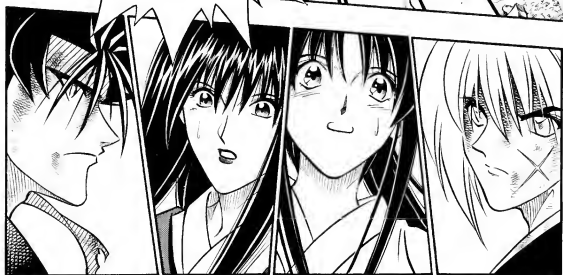


Act 198

**I Can't
See Him
Losing**

仲宏
和月









LEFT
AGAINST
LEFT...

HOW
IRONIC.



IF YOU
DON'T GIVE
ME A GOOD
ANSWER, I
WON'T TREAT
YOUR RIGHT
HAND.

I
DUNNO.



BUT
GATOTSU'S
MOMENTUM
RIVALS THAT OF
KENSHIN'S
KUZU-RYUSEN.

LOOKING
AT THE LENGTH
OF HIS ARM,
THAT SPIDER
MAN HAS THE
ADVANTAGE.



YOU'RE
USELESS.

FIFTY-
FIFTY.

AND?

SHUT
UP.
BUT...



HUH?

SO?

I'M
ASKING,
WHO HAS
THE
ADVANTAGE
?

...AGAINST
ANYONE
BUT
KENSIN.

...I
CAN'T
SEE
HIM
LOSING...











SPLORRT



THE
DIRT HE
THREW WITH
HIS LEFT
ARM JUST
SLIGHTLY
SLOWED THE
GATOTSU'S
MOMENTUM.

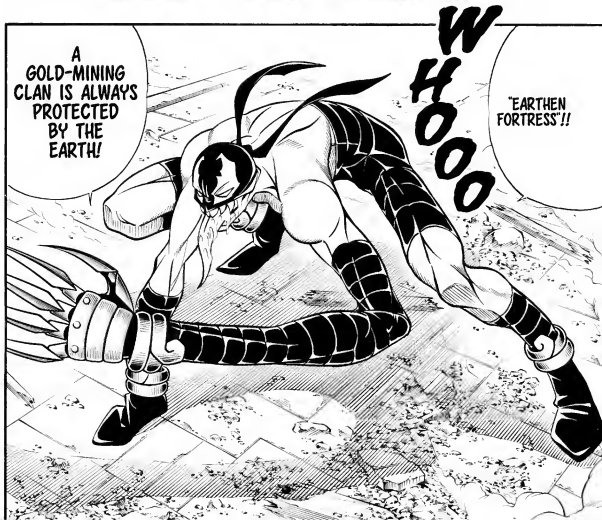


SAITŌ'S
GATOTSU
WAS
PUSHED
BACK...



...WAS
ENOUGH TO
AFFECT THE
OUTCOME OF
THE STRIKE.

BUT
EVEN THAT
SLIGHT
AMOUNT...



A
GOLD-MINING
CLAN IS ALWAYS
PROTECTED
BY THE
EARTH!

W
H
O
O
O

"EARTHEN
FORTRESS"!!



AS LONG
AS I HAVE
THIS LEFT
ARM, FORMED
BY "BODY
SHAPING"...

...THE
EARTH
AND
THE
SHADOWS
ARE
WITHIN
MY
GRASP!

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE
FOR ANY STRIKE
TO MAINTAIN ITS
FULL STRENGTH WHEN
IT COMES AGAINST
THIS WALL OF
EARTH AND THE
BLOW FROM MY
LEFT ARM!

I WILL MAKE
YOU GREATLY
REGRET RUDELY
POKING YOUR
NOSE INTO
MY BUSINESS.

!

NOW
IS MY
MOMENT
OF FULFILL-
MENT!

IT'S ALREADY
BEEN 15
YEARS SINCE
I LEFT THE
CLAN TO
CHASE
BATTOSAI.



HEH



YOU...

...FOOL.



EVEN
THOUGH
YOU'RE
MERELY A
FREAK...

...YOU
STILL
NEED TO
HAVE LIMITS
TO YOUR
STUPIDITY.





THE
RESULT
WILL BE
THE SAME,
NO MATTER
HOW MANY
TIMES YOU
TRY IT!!
THIS—

YOU
STILL
PLAN TO
USE THAT
MOVE!?

SHUUP





"EARTHEN
FORTRESS"
WILL NOT BE
BREACHED!!

KIAAAYAK





...BUT, UN-
FORTUNATELY
FOR YOU, MY
LEFT ARM MOVES
FASTER AND
MORE PRECISELY
THAN A MACHINE.

YOU
ARE QUITE
RESOURCEFUL
TO IDENTIFY
THIS TARGET
AFTER A
SINGLE EXCHANGE...

SH

SH

SHU

AK

SO
WHAT?

HAH!

THE ONE
PLACE THAT IS
UNPROTECTED
BY THE WALL!

GATOTSU
ON THE
TIP OF
HIS LEFT
ARM!

!!



MY
PLAN HAS
ONLY JUST
BEGUN.





牙^が突^{とつ}零^ぜ式^ろ!!
しき

GATOTSU ZEROSHIKI!!

Rurouni Kenshin



牙突

GATOTSU
ZEROSHIKI!!!

零式!!!

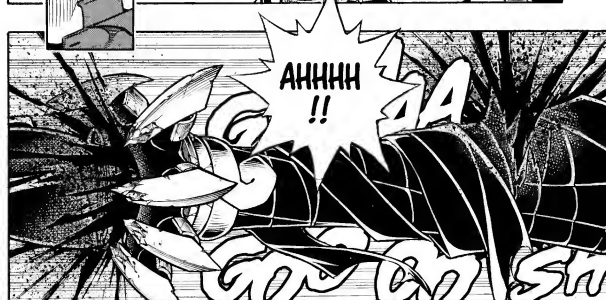
ゼロ
しき

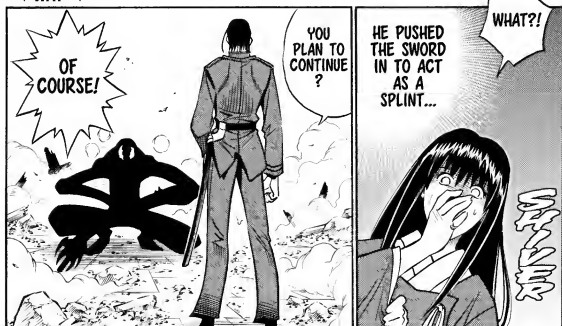
Act 199

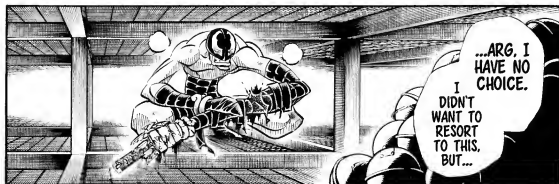
Inadequate Strategy





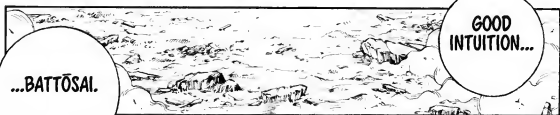












EXPLOSIVE POWDERS
ARE PACKED INTO A
CLAY POT, CREATING
AN UNDERGROUND
BOMB KNOWN IN
MAINLAND CHINA SINCE
THE MING DYNASTY!!

EXPLOSIVE
MINES!!

JUST
LIKE
THIS—

YANK

THEY EXPLODE
WHEN STEPPED
ON...OR WHEN I
ACTIVATE THEM.

YOUR
LEGS
WILL BE
BLOWN
OFF IF
YOU
MAKE A
MISTAKE.

THOSE ARE
FIERCE
EXPLOSIONS.

YOU
CAN'T
MAKE A
CARELESS
MOVE.

!

**BAA
BOOM
BOOM**

AND THE
FEAR OF BEING
ATTACKED FROM
UNDERGROUND...?

HYA HA
HA HA!

HOW'S
THE FEAR OF
NOT KNOWING
WHERE THEY
MIGHT
EXPLODE?

AND THE
FEAR OF
BEING ABLE TO
MOVE EVEN
A STEP?



ONE
MORE PERSON
WHO GOT
INVOLVED IN
YOUR LIFE
WILL DIE...

WATCH
CAREFULLY,
BATTOSAI.



DO NOT
REGRET...

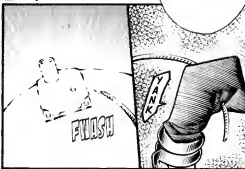
...THOSE
WORDS.

...THIS ONE
DOES NOT
PLAN ON
LETTING
ANYONE
WITHIN SIGHT
DIE.

UNFORTUN-
ATELY...

KENSHIN...









GASHUNK

SPLAT



THIS
SWORD IS
WORTH TOO
MUCH TO
LET IT
RUST IN A
FREAK'S
BLOOD.

WHY
DON'T
YOU GIVE
THIS
BACK?

CRAB

GUH...

THUNK

UUH...

OH...

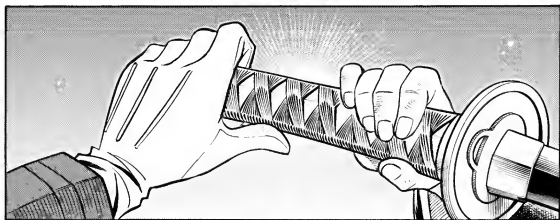
UGH...

DIE.

...BUT IF
YOU'D RATHER
BE DEAD,
I'LL GRANT
YOU YOUR
WISH.

SOMEONE
WHO LOSES
SIGHT OF THE
BIG PICTURE
BY LIVING IN
A PERSONAL
BATTLE DOES
NOT QUALIFY
FOR MY 'SWIFT
DEATH TO
EVIL'...

TMP



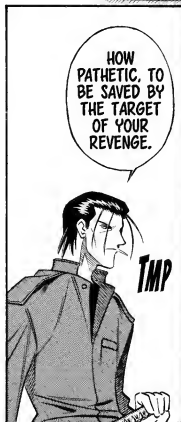
WHAT
IS THE
MEANING
OF THIS?



AH!



!



YATSUME
...

IF YOU
WISH TO FIGHT
THIS ONE, HEAL
YOUR WOUNDS
AND COME
BACK.

THIS WAS
ORIGINALLY A
PERSONAL AFFAIR
BETWEEN US...
A DUEL WILL
ALWAYS BE
ACCEPTED.

HOWEVER...
IF IT IS
POSSIBLE...

...TRAVEL
NORTH TO
LIVE FOR
YOUR
CLAN.

YOU,
WHO CAN
COMMAND
THE EARTH
AT WILL...

...WOULD
BE A
GREAT
AID TO
THEM.

...UGH...
OH...OH...
OH...

...GUH...

...



AH
WELL.
THIS
FINALLY
MEANS...

...THAT
THE REAL
DEAL IS
COMING
DOWN.

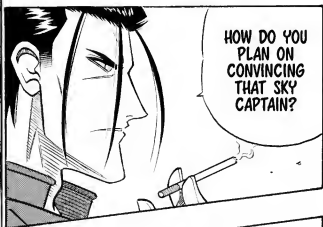


OH...
YES.

MEGUMI-
DONO, PLEASE
TEND TO HIS
WOUNDS.



YOU ARE
VERY
PERSUASIVE,
AS USUAL.



HOW DO YOU
PLAN ON
CONVINCING
THAT SKY
CAPTAIN?



...

The Secret Life of Characters (46) —Yatsume Mummyōi—

The model is quite old. It is *kuno otoko*, but not the American version. So, he has similar roots as Han'nya. I meant this to be a second attempt at the "freaks" theme, which did not go so well with Han'nya. Looking at the result, I honestly think I was utterly defeated. The biggest reason for the defeat is Saitō Hajime. Usui was the same way, but in front of this man, any character turns into a weakling... In that sense, Saitō is a death gate for characters. Mummyōi's body shaping is one of the ideas that I personally like, but it seems a little unfitting for a shonen manga. Either way, a topic like deformation of the body is a very sensitive issue, and I had to be very careful with how I dealt with it—but this may have detracted from the attention I needed to pay to the story as a whole. (Of course, Watsuki's lack of competence is a huge factor...) I have changed my thoughts a bit these days to "there should be more positive themes that ought to be in a shonen manga, rather than a negative theme like 'freaks.'" I want to be dealing with more positive themes in the future." So there will be no more attempts at the "freaks" theme. But I will continue to challenge freaks in terms of design, since I do still like them.

The model in terms of design, as you can see, is all jumbled up. In the silhouette stage, the image was the bandana mask version of Wolverine from *X-Men + Carnage* from *Spider-man*. I was told by various people to do *Spider-man*, or to do *Spawn* and such, so I became agitated and said, "I'll throw in *Venom* also!" digging my own grave and self-destructing. I added the gold-mining clan bit after the fact, but he still ended up as a character that stands out from the time period.

I'm stupid. I'm a fool. I am a failure as a manga artist. I want to go up into the mountain and train myself from step one. Actually, once my work comes to a closure, I will seriously go train myself. I'll be hit by the waterfall and have an epiphany. (Seriously.)



Act 200
The Destined Duel



ENISHI...

...NOT
EVEN THE
SLIGHTEST
MOVE-
MENT...

HE'S
UP SO
HIGH...

IT WILL
TAKE HIM
TIME TO
RELEASE
ENOUGH GAS
TO COME
DOWN.



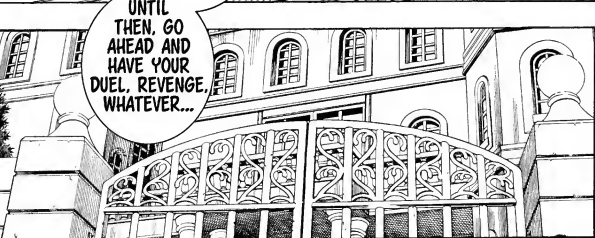


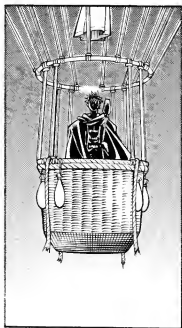
Act 200

**The
Destined
Duel**











TOMOE
...



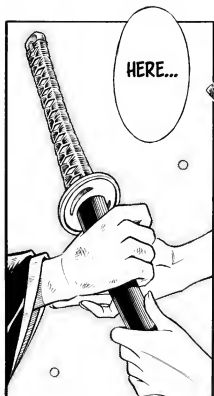
...TO
PROTECT
THE
PRESENT...

FIGHT...
NOW...

THE
SAKABATŌ.

KAORU-
DONO.





HERE...



KENSHIN

HEY.



...YES.



I WISH
EVERYONE...

...COULD
ACHIEVE
HAPPINESS...

WE'VE FINALLY
REACHED THE
NEW ERA.
AFTER MANY
PAINFUL
STRUGGLES.



THE NEW
ERA HAS
JUST
BEGUN.



HEY,
YOU SAY
SOME-
THING
TOO!

YEAH,
JUST ONE
WORD!

HMM
?



WELL.
GOOD
LUCK WITH
THAT.

...ANY
WOUNDS
YOU MAY
RECEIVE!

I'LL
HEAL...



GO
SETTLE
THIS FOR
GOOD!!

ALL
RIGHT
!!









...WHAT IS...

...THIS PLACE...?

A



OR A MORGUE...?



SOME SORT OF A LABORATORY?



...



HUH?



THERE'S NO NEED TO HANG OUT HERE. I'LL DO A QUICK SEARCH AND HEAD OUT...



KLAK

KLAK

WHATEVER IT IS, THE MASTER OF THIS DOMAIN IS NOT SANE.

WHAT IS THIS?





...FOR
THE
CRIMES
OF THE
HITOKIRI
AND THE
CRIME OF
TAKING
TOMOE'S
LIFE...

BUT
THIS
ONE
WILL
SEARCH
FOR A
WAY TO
PAY...



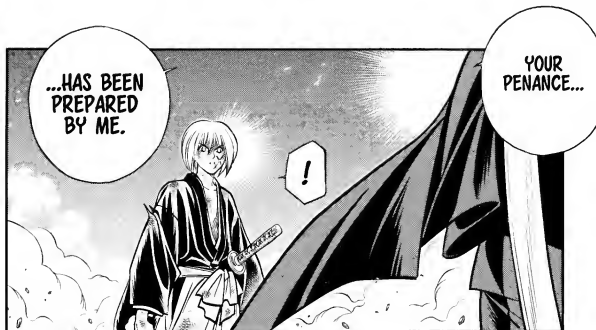
YES...

COUNT-
LESS.



I'M SURE
THERE'S
NO NEED
TO ASK...

...BUT
HAVE
YOU NO
DOUBTS
ABOUT
FIGHTING?





THE PAIN
FROM THE
WOUND YOU
SLASHED
INTO MY
SISTER'S
BEAUTIFUL
BODY...

BUT
BEFORE
THAT,
BATTOSAI...

I WILL
HAVE YOU
EXPERIENCE
THE PAIN...



IT IS
TIME TO
COMPLETE
THE
JINCHŪ!

NOW!

Rurouni Kenshin



Act 201—Another Strength

...WHEN
WE SAW
EACH OTHER
FOR THE FIRST
TIME IN TEN
YEARS...

I TOLD
YOU ON
THE BRIDGE
AT DAWN...

FWAP

I WOULD
SHOW YOU
ANOTHER
STRENGTH,
DIFFERENT
FROM THE
STRENGTH
OF THE
MAFIA...

...

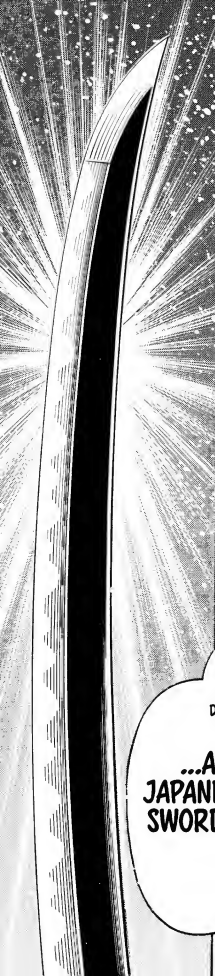
OBSERVE.

AS
PROMISED.

Act 201
Another
Strength

仲宏
和月





IT'S
QUITE
LONG.
WHAT
KIND OF
SWORD
IS IT?

IT MUST
HAVE
ARRIVED
FROM
THE
CONTINENT.
FROM
CHINA?

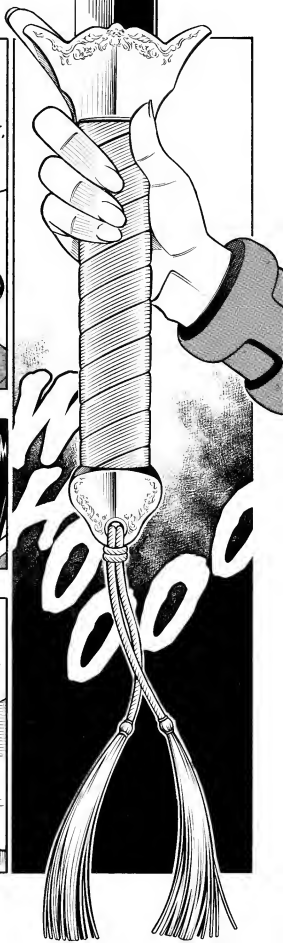
NO...

WHAT?

...BUT
THAT
BLADE IS
DEFINITELY...

THE
FINISH
IS FROM
THE
CONTINENT
...

...A
JAPANESE
SWORD?!





CORRECT.

IT IS THE
TACHI.
COMMON UP
TO THE
WARRING
STATES ERA.



IT IS A JAPANESE
SWORD. BUT
LOOKING AT THE
LENGTH, IT'S NOT
THE *UCHIGATANA*,
THE MOST COMMON
SWORD SINCE
THE EDO PERIOD.

WHAT'S
IMPORTANT IS
TO HAVE THE
STRENGTH TO
BE ABLE TO
CRUSH AN ENEMY,
WHATEVER
THEIR ABILITY.

IT IS
THE NORM
IN BATTLE
TO NOT
KNOW THE
ENEMY'S
ABILITY.

BUT LOOKING
AT THE FINE
CRAFTSMANSHIP
OF THE BLADE,
I DON'T THINK
IT'S A
BLUFF.

QUIT
PANICKING.
IT'S
ANNOYING.

IT COULD
JUST BE
A BLUFF.

THE
OTHER FIVE
HAVE ALL
BEEN
DUBIOUS
CHARAC-
TERS.

WHAT
DOES
THAT
MEAN?



UNLESS
HE IS
ABOVE
SHISHIO'S
LEVEL...

TRUE...

...KENSIN
WILL
NEVER
LOSE.



KENSIN —

...

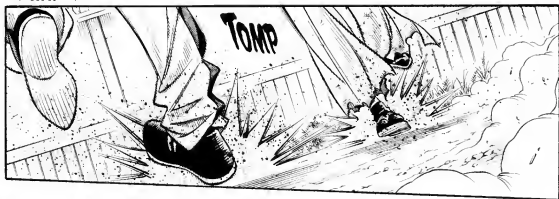


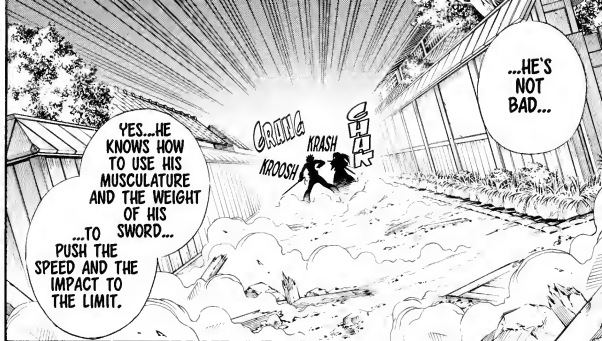












YES...HE
KNOWS HOW
TO USE HIS
MUSCULATURE
AND THE WEIGHT
OF HIS
SWORD...
...TO
PUSH THE
SPEED AND THE
IMPACT TO
THE LIMIT.

...HE'S
NOT
BAD...



...IS A
MASTER
SWORDSMAN.

THAT
MAN...

HIS SWORD-
ENERGY
IS NOT
INFERIOR TO
KENSIN'S.



HE HAS
POTENTIAL.
HE
HAS THE
TRAINING.

...BUT
THAT'S
IT.

...HE'S
NOWHERE
NEAR
SHISHIO.

CLENCH

AT
THAT
LEVEL...

...WITH
THAT.

SHUSHU

I
AGREE
...

DO I
NEED TO
MENTION THAT
KENSIN
IS THE
GRAND-
MASTER?

SO
WHAT
IF HE
IS?

BUT IF
HE DIDN'T
TRAVEL
TO THE
CONTINENT...

...IF HE
LEARNED
"KENJUTSU"
HERE—

TMP

...REVEAL
SOME OF
YOUR HITEN
MOVES?

WHY
DON'T
YOU...

ARE
YOU JUST
GAUGING
ME?

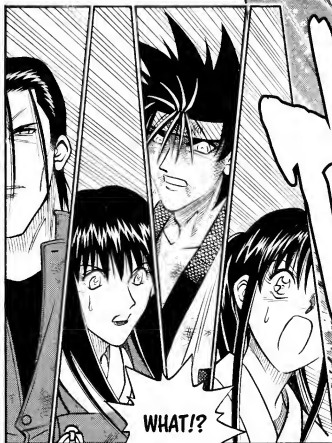
HOW
HALF-
HEARTED.

OR DO
YOU...
...NEED
ME TO
SHOW
YOU SOME
OF MINE?

HERE'S
ONE!

THEN...

KIAA
AA
!



WHAT!?

AAK

「倭刀術」

WHOOSH

WATŌJUTSU!

SHŪGEKI TŌSEI
(KICKING SWORD
RUSH)!!

蹴撃刀勢!!

シュー
ゲキ
バツ
セイ







THE NEW
KENJUTSU,
PERFECTED IN THE
CONTINENT WITH THE
TACHI BROUGHT OVER
FROM JAPAN IN
THE ANCIENT
DAYS...



HE DOUBLED
THE FORCE
OF HIS SWORD
SWING BY
ADDING
THE KICK!

HE'S...
ACQUIRED A
FORM OF
"KENJUTSU"
ALL RIGHT!!



I'VE NEVER
HEARD OF
ANYTHING
LIKE THAT...

BUT
"WATO-
JUTSU"...



THE
STRENGTH
THAT LET
ME CLIMB TO
THE TOP FROM
ABSOLUTE
ZERO...

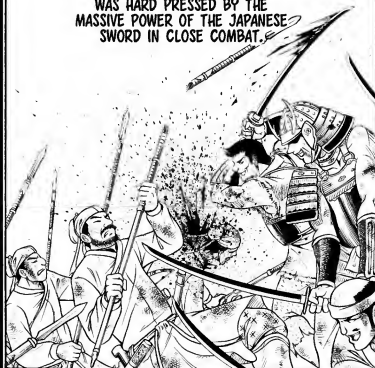
THIS IS
THE POWER
I GAINED
OVER TEN
YEARS...

Rurouni Kenshin



Act 202—Tales of the Past

THE MING CALLED THEM WAKŌ—JAPANESE INVADERS—AND FOUGHT BACK. HOWEVER, THE MING ARMY WAS HARD PRESSED BY THE MASSIVE POWER OF THE JAPANESE SWORD IN CLOSE COMBAT.



FROM THE 13TH TO THE 18TH CENTURY, PIRATES ROAMED THE SEA OF JAPAN, EVENTUALLY CROSSING IT AND APPEARING ON THE SHORES OF THE CONTINENT.

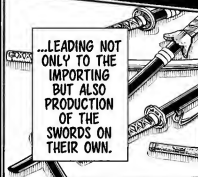


HE COLLECTED THE KNOWLEDGE INTO A BOOK CALLED TANTO HŌSEN—THE WAY OF THE SHORT SWORD—AND CIRCULATED IT THROUGH THE CHINESE ARMY.



TEI SŌYŪ, A GENERAL WHO WAS ONCE A SHAOLIN MONK, FOCUSED ON RESEARCHING THESE SWORDS AND THEIR KENJUTSU.

...LEADING NOT ONLY TO THE IMPORTING BUT ALSO PRODUCTION OF THE SWORDS ON THEIR OWN.



ANOTHER GENERAL, SEKI KEIKO, WAS THE FIRST TO EQUIP HIS UNITS WITH JAPANESE SWORDS. IN THE LATER YEARS OF MING, JAPANESE SWORDS BECAME THE OFFICIAL EQUIPMENT OF THE ARMY...

Act 202—Tales of the Past

...AND THE NEW
CONTINENTAL
KENJUTSU TO
COMMAND IT,
"WATŌJUTSU"!!

RELEASED
FROM THE
CONFINES OF
JAPAN, THE
CONTINENT
PRODUCED
A NEW
JAPANESE
SWORD,
"WATŌ"...

和伸
月宏









...BUT
TO STOP
YOU.

NEITHER.

THIS ONE
IS FIGHTING,
NOT TO
HARM YOU...



WHOOOOOOO



...I'LL
ENTERTAIN
MYSELF
WITH A
LITTLE
STORY.

FINE THEN.
UNTIL
YOU GET
SERIOUS...

...IT SEEMS
TO TAKE A
LONG TIME
FOR YOU TO
COME FULLY
AFLAME.

NOT ONLY
ARE YOU
HARD TO
IGNITE, BUT
ONCE THE
SPARK
CATCHES...

FWASH



LET'S
GO!!

GUH!



ONCE
UPON A
TIME—

...THERE WAS
A KID WHOSE
BIG SISTER
WAS KILLED
BY A
HITOKIRI.





THE POOR CHILD,
ALONE IN THE
WORLD, CAME TO
HATE JAPAN AND
CROSSED THE
SEA TO
SHANGHAI.

HOWEVER,
SHANGHAI
IS THE EVIL
CAPITAL OF
THE EAST. IT'S
DIFFICULT FOR A
WEAKLING TO
SURVIVE, AND THE
CHILD BECAME
SKIN AND
BONES WITHIN
A MONTH.

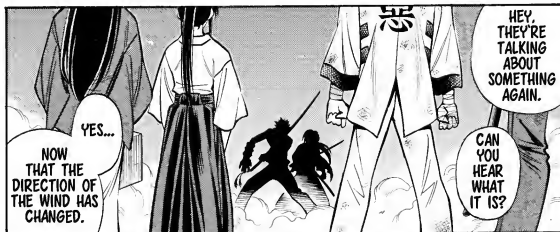
KACHANG

IT'S
JUST TO
KEEP
MYSELF
BUSY.

YOU AREN'T
FIGHTING
SERIOUSLY
YET, RIGHT?
SO JUST
RELAX AND
LISTEN.

NO MORE
OF THAT
STORY.

DO NOT
SPEAK.



YES...

NOW
THAT THE
DIRECTION OF
THE WIND HAS
CHANGED.

HEY,
THEY'RE
TALKING
ABOUT
SOMETHING
AGAIN.

CAN
YOU
HEAR
WHAT
IT IS?

...A
TALE FROM
THE PAST.

IT
SOUNDS
LIKE...



FINALLY,
THE
CHILD
COULD
NOT KEEP
GOING.

STARVATION
AND
EXHAUSTION,
SICKNESS
AND
WOUNDS...



"A JAPANESE
CHILD, HERE...?
BRING SOME
MEDICINE,
NOW!"

THEN—
"HEY,
ARE YOU
OKAY!?"



TO
PUT IT
SIMPLY,
THEY
WERE INTEL-
LECTUALS.

THE
COUPLE WAS
JAPANESE,
RESIDING
IN
SHANGHAI
IN ORDER
TO RESEARCH
THE
LITERATURE
OF THE
CONTINENT.



"...YOU
DON'T
HAVE TO
TELL US
IF YOU
DON'T
WANT
TO."

"..."

"WE'RE BOTH
JAPANESE,
MAKE
YOURSELF
AT HOME."



"I DON'T KNOW
WHAT HAPPENED,
BUT GET SOME
REST NOW."

THE CHILD
HELD ONTO
HIS LIFE.



NUTRITIOUS MEALS
AND DEVOTED
MEDICAL CARE...



IT WOULD BE
HARD FOR A
CHILD TO
SURVIVE ALONE
IN SHANGHAI.



I SEE, THE
COUPLE
BECAME HIS
GUARDIANS IN
SHANGHAI.

...THANKED
THE GODS...



THE CHILD,
IN AN
UNFAMILIAR
ACT...



FOR
GRANTING
HIM SUCH
FOOLISH
PREY.





IT'S
SELF-TAUGHT,
SO THERE'S
A UNIQUE
PERSONAL
TWIST TO
IT...

...BUT BY
THE TIME
HE FINISHED
GROWING, HE
WAS SECOND
TO NONE AS A
PRACTITIONER
OF WATO-
JUTSU.

A
STRONG
POWER—

...WHY DID
THE CHILD
MASSACRE
THEM?

NOW, HERE IS
THE QUESTION—
STEALING FROM
THE FAMILY
WOULD HAVE
BEEN
ENOUGH...

...ENOUGH...

ANSWER 1—
THE FAMILY
RESISTED.

ANSWER 2—
THE CHILD
WAS A
PSYCHOPATH.

THIS WAS
HOW THE
CHILD AND
WATOJUTSU
MET.

...THE SIGHT
OF A FAMILY
LIVING IN
HAPPINESS WAS
UNBEARABLE.

ANSWER 3—
FOR THE CHILD,
WHOSE SISTER
WAS KILLED BY
A MERCILESS
HITOKIRI,
DESTROYING
HIS HAPPI-
NESS...

THE
CORRECT
ANSWER...

STOP
TALKING.

...IS,
WITHOUT
DEBATE,
NUMBER
THREE.

REURO

ENISHI!

RYUKANSEN (DRAGON-
SPIRAL STRIKE)!!

HITEN
MITSURUGI-RYŪ!

閃龍卷
!!

飛天御剣流

FWAANG

BUT A FLAME
OF THAT SIZE
IS EASILY
BLOWN BACK
BY THE WIND
FROM THE
CONTINENT—

YOUR
FLAME IS
GROWING.

...YOU!!

...BURNING
...



回刺刀勢!!!

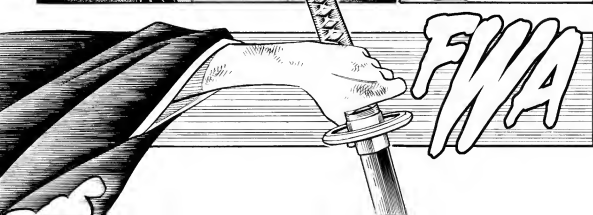
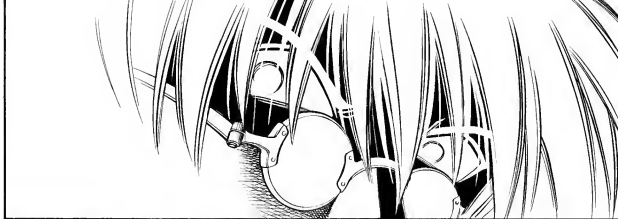
KAISHI TŌSEI
(SPIRAL PIERCE
SWORD RUSH)!!!

倭刀術

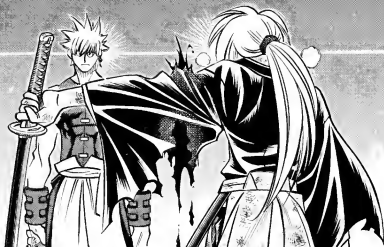
WATŌJUTSU!

ワタナベ
シユツ





THIS IS
A PERSONAL
BATTLE
BETWEEN THIS
ONE AND YOU...
THERE IS NO NEED
TO INVOLVE
ANYONE
ELSE...



YOU
WILL BE
STOPPED
HERE.



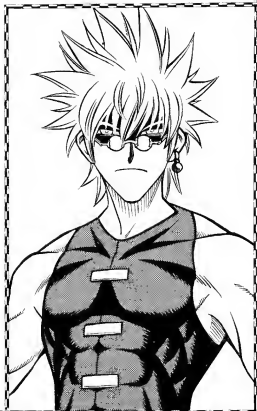
TAP

HEH

IT'S THE
REAL DEAL
STARTING
NOW.

FINE.
THE
CHITCHAT
IS OVER.

Rurouni Kenshin



Act 203
A Pure and Simple
End to a 15-Year Duel





Act 203

A Pure and Simple End to a 15-Year Duel

仲伸
和月



GET
AWAY
WHILE
YOU
CAN.

WE
DON'T NEED
ANY MORE
PROBLEMS
THAN WE
ALREADY
HAVE.



HEY.

...THINGS
COULD
GET QUITE
COMPLICATED.

IF
YOU STAY
HERE...

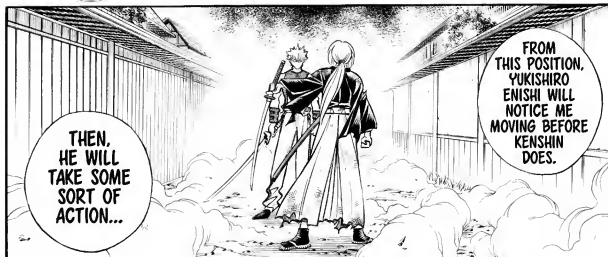


THOSE
EYES...WERE
NOT ONLY
SEEING AN
ENEMY.

I CAN'T
DESCRIBE
IT WELL...
BUT IT'S
BEYOND
THAT—

YOU ARE
REFERRING
TO
YUKISHIRO
ENISHI'S
EYES.

...I
UNDER-
STAND.





YOU ARE
ABOUT HALF
AN ENEMY
TO KENSHIN.



MORE THAN
HALF. GET
IT RIGHT.



I
KNOW.

JUST
TO LET YOU
KNOW, I WON'T
LEND A HAND
IF ANYTHING
HAPPENS.



FWOOO



**GO FOR IT
KENSHIN!!**







CHANG HANG

CHANG HANG

CHANG HANG

CHANG HANG

CHANG HANG

CHANG HANG



STILL NOT
ENOUGH. YOU
CAN'T BE
SERIOUS, NOT
WITH THIS
LOW LEVEL OF
ACTIVITY...

WHY
DON'T YOU
FIRE OFF A
HITEN MOVE OR
TWO, TO TEST
IT OUT?



WATŌJUTSU
!!

HE'S
COMING!

SHŌHA TŌSEI
(DESTRUCTIVE PALM
SWORD RUSH!)

掌破ハ
刀勢
セイ

VOOOOM



飛天御剣流

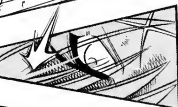
HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ!

龍槌閃!

RYŪTSUISEN
(DRAGON-
HAMMER
STRIKE)!

THAT'S IT.
THE MID-
FLIGHT MOVE
WORTHY OF
THE NAME
OF HITEN!

HOW I'VE
WANTED
TO
DEFEAT
THIS...



倭刀術!

WATŌJUTSU!

HA!!

CHŌTEN TŌSEI
(MORNING SKY
SWORD RUSH)!!!

朝
天
刀
勢

チヨウ

テン

トウ

マセイ

FWOOOM

KENSHIN
!!



...THEN
THIS DUEL
IS OVER
RIGHT NOW.

IF YOUR
SKILL LEVEL IS
INSUFFICIENT
TO DETERMINE
WHEN YOUR
OPPONENT IS
SERIOUS...

THE
HOT AIR
BALLOON
KUJIRANAMI
ABANDONED
...

!?

流御
!! 剣

MITSURUGI-
RYŪ!

HITEN

飛天



九頭くず

KUZU-RYŪSEN (NINE-
HEADED DRAGON)!

龍りゅう

閃せん

!!!

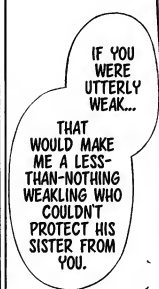






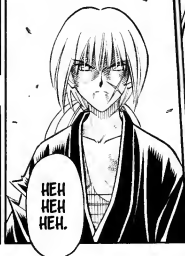
IT SEEMS
LIKE
HE WAS...
ALREADY
IN THE
STATE...

...OF
MIND OVER
BODY, EVEN
BEFORE
THE FIGHT
STARTED.



IF YOU
WERE
UTTERLY
WEAK...

THAT
WOULD MAKE
ME A LESS-
THAN-NOTHING
WEAKLING WHO
COULDN'T
PROTECT HIS
SISTER FROM
YOU.



HEH
HEH
HEH.



I AM HAPPY,
BATTOSAI...I
WANTED YOU
TO HAVE THIS
DEGREE OF
POWER...

...HIDDEN
WITHIN
YOURSELF.



...KENSHIN
WILL HAVE
TO USE THE
MOVE THAT WILL
RENDER HIM
COMPLETELY
IMMOBILE.

IN ORDER
TO STOP
THAT MAN
WITHOUT
KILLING
HIM—

THE
SECRET
MOVE,
AMAKAKERU
RYŪ NO
HIRAMEKI.

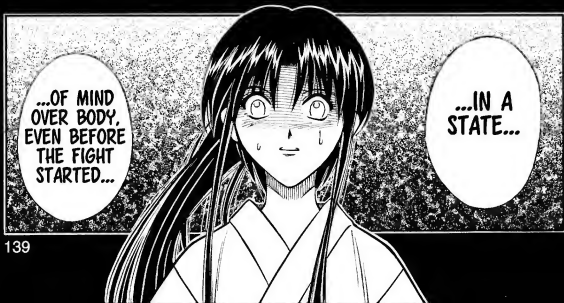


Rurouni Kenshin



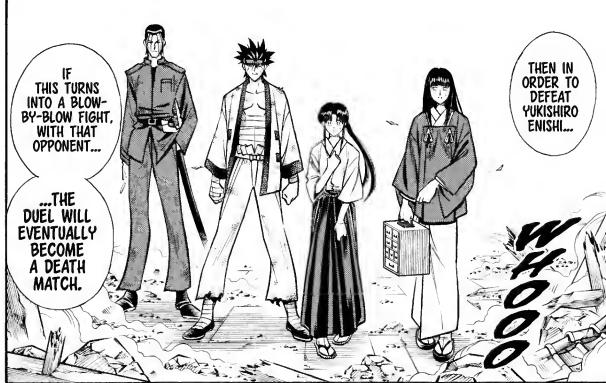


Act 204
Sin, Judgment,
Acceptance



...OF MIND
OVER BODY,
EVEN BEFORE
THE FIGHT
STARTED...

...IN A
STATE...





NOW...

TAK



AT LEAST I
NOW KNOW
THAT YOU
POSSESS
POWERS
WORTHY
OF AN
OPPONENT.

I STILL
HAVE TO
PERFORM
THE
COMPLETION
OF THE
JINCHU.

...PUT
AN END
TO THIS.

NOW
LET'S...

THE
SECRET
OF HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYU!

UNLEASH
IT!

THE
MOVE
YOU
USED TO
DESTROY
GEIN'S
KARAKURI
SUIT.

W
F
O
O
O

AMAKAKERU
RYU NO
HIRAMEKI!!

...

YOUR
GRUDGE
AGAINST THIS
ONE IS ALSO
NOT WRONG...

YOUR
FEELINGS
FOR TOMOE
ARE NOT
WRONG...



FORGIVE
THIS
ONE...

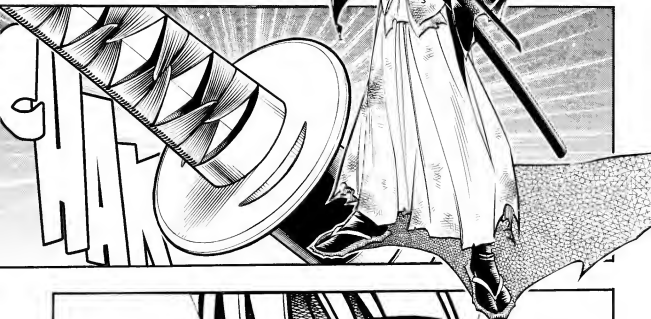
ENISHI.



...IS
DEFINITELY
WRONG.

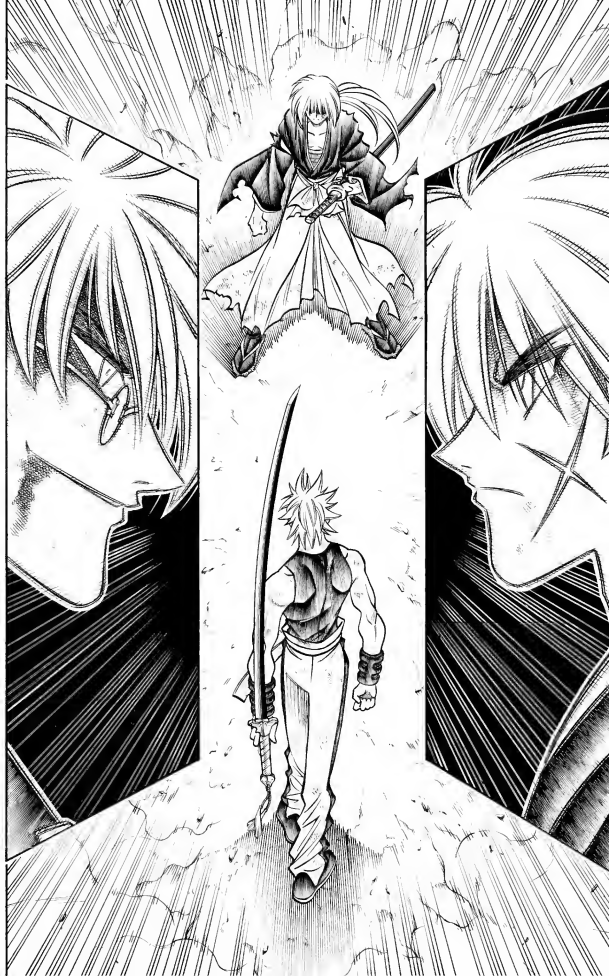
S
H
A

BUT THE
WAY YOU'VE
LIVED THE
LAST 15
YEARS...



...CUT IT
AWAY.

THIS
ONE WILL
NOW...







THAT
UNUSUAL
STANCE...

HE CHALLENGED
THE SECRET MOVE,
AND NOW MUST
INTEND TO STRIKE
BACK WITH SOME-
THING JUST AS
POWERFUL.



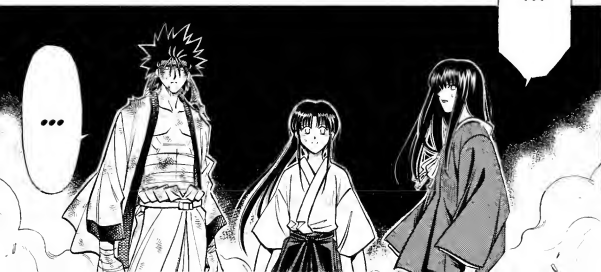
KENSHIN
HAS THE
UTMOST
CONFIDENCE
IN IT.

THAT'S
WHY HE
WOULD
USE IT
AT THIS
MOMENT—



IT'S ALL
THE SAME.
AMAKAKERU
RYU NO
HIRAMEKI
KNOWS NO
DEFEAT.

IT HAS
BROUGHT
DOWN THE
MOST
POWERFUL OF
FOES UP
TO NOW.



THAT MAN, EVEN AFTER
SEEING KEN-SAN'S
ABILITIES FIRST HAND,
HASN'T LOST ONE
BIT OF CONFIDENCE
IN HIS VICTORY—



BUT...



I DON'T BELIEVE
THAT HE'S STRONGER
THAN SHISHIO...BUT THE
MAN STANDING IN
FRONT OF KENSHIN
GIVES OFF A
DIFFERENT ENERGY
THAN SHISHIO—

BUT KENSHIN
POSSESSES THE
CONSCIOUSNESS OF
"SIN," FOR
HAVING TAKEN
TOMOE'S LIFE—

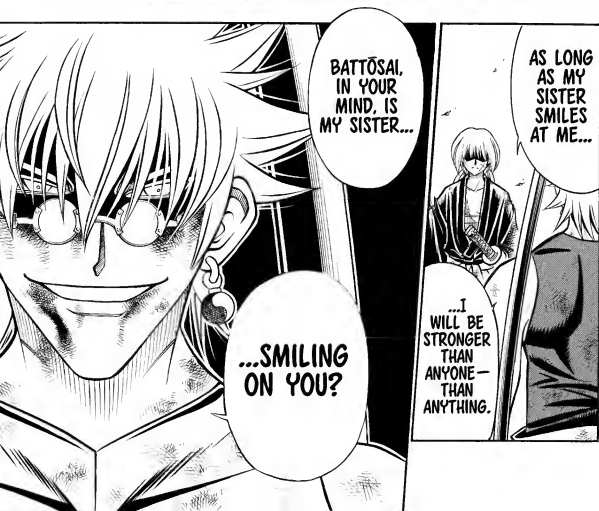


WHAT YUKISHIRO
ENISHI IS GIVING
OFF IS PROBABLY
THE CONSCIOUSNESS
OF "JUDGMENT,"
TRYING TO TAKE
REVENGE...

...THIS BATTLE
SHOULD COME
AFTER FINDING
THE ANSWER—



KENSHIN SAYS
HE WILL FIND
THE ANSWER
BEYOND THIS
BATTLE, BUT
MAYBE...





SHE
IS NOT
SMILING
RIGHT
NOW...

BUT...

...LET'S
GO...



THIS ONE
BELIEVES
SHE WILL
SMILE
UPON HIM
WHEN THIS
BATTLE
ENDS...

HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ FINAL MOVE!!

ひ てん みつるぎ りゅう おう ぎ
飛天御剣流 奥義!!

AMAKAKERU RYŪ
NO HIRAMEKI!!!!

龍

りゅうの

天

あま

閃

ひらめき

翔

かける

!!!!

ワ・ドウ・シュツ・ゼツ・キ
倭刀術 絶技!!

WATŌJUTSU LETHAL MOVE!!

絶

ゼツ

斬

SHUUNK

虎

コ

刀

ドウ

伏

フク

勢

セイ

KOFUKU ZETTŌSEI
(CROUCHING TIGER
SEVERING SWORD
RUSH)!!!

!!!



NO, IT
STARTS
NOW.

HE
DODGED
IT!

THE
ULTIMATE
SECOND
STRIKE!

HE'S
GOING
TO GET
KILLED!!

AAAAAH
!!!

HAAAAAAHH
!!!



"FREE TALK"

Long time no see, this is Watsuki. In the transition from spring to summer, I felt sick and slept for a whole day. It seems like my energy level has fallen lower than I thought, so I said to myself, "I've gotta do something," in a Kansai accent. I've started by ordering the AbOlex by mail order. I can't fall to illness for at least one more year!

While I wait for the AbOlex, let's talk about figures and games. My recommendation for figures is the "X-Men Gift Pack 2". Last year's "Gift Pack 1" was worth crying for joy about, but this one is also magnificent. The characters that haven't been made into figures before, like the so-much-loved Sunfire, and Banshee's first-appearance monkey face, are great. Please, Oh Mighty Toy Biz, release all X characters with the current action figure technology! I will be fine with a hundred-body kit the size of one tatami mat. Bring it on!! In terms of games, since I've been unable to make my once-a-week trip to the arcades due to the moving fiasco, I have completely stopped going to arcades. When someone says "And you call yourself a gamer!?" I point out that Watsuki is not a "Gamer," but a "manga artist who likes games." So take that. For Watsuki, "manga" is always the priority. But as I write this, it is close to the release of *Samurai Spirits 2*, *Asura Zanmaden* (SNK), so I am thinking of stopping by the arcades soon. I really hope a local arcade gets it this time, but we'll see... In terms of console games, I bought *Shiritsu Justice Gakuen* PS version (Capcom) and played it with the assistants for only about one hour. I seriously have no time. By the way, I had some weird feelings for Akira. I might have fallen if it was 2D (3D up close is a bit harsh...).

Other than the previously mentioned, Watsuki also likes "dusk." The panoramic view from the new workplace nine floors up gives me a good feeling, and that alone makes it worth the move. On a very good day, I can see Mt. Fuji, and on a misty day it looks like I'm in London (though I have never been to London, or anywhere outside the country for that matter), giving off a good vibe. Getting energized with games and figures, and relaxing with the view. This seems to be the method of my self-control these days.

The last topic is, of course, manga. I have recently started to see the style and story design of my future works. I have written about the style before, so I'll omit that. In terms of the story, to put it simply, it's the "exciting anticipation" out of Thrill, Excitement, and Anticipation. You may think "What the heck?" But there is no better way to describe it with words. I'm sorry. Anyhow, those aspects will materialize way in the future, so now I will keep working at *Rurouni Kenshin* with all of my spirit.

See you in the next volume!



Act 205—The True
Intent of the Jinchū

WATŌJUTSU
LETHAL MOVE!!

倭刀術
絶技

飛天
御剣流
奥義

HITEN
MITSURUGI-RYŪ
FINAL—

絶虎
刀伏

天翔
龍

閃

!!

勢

!!!

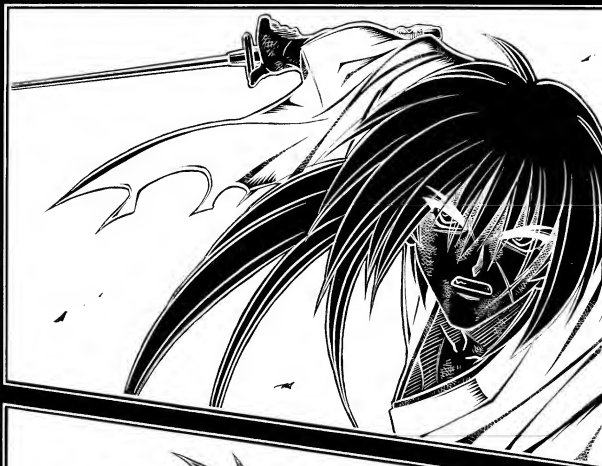
KOFUKU
ZETTOSEI!!!

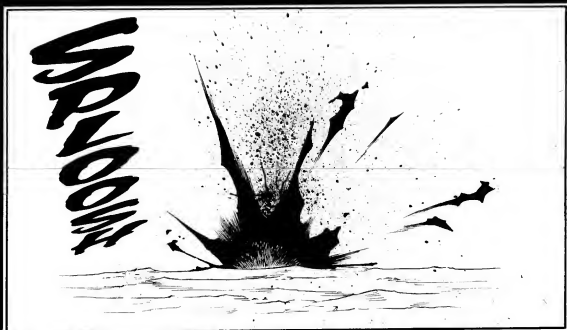
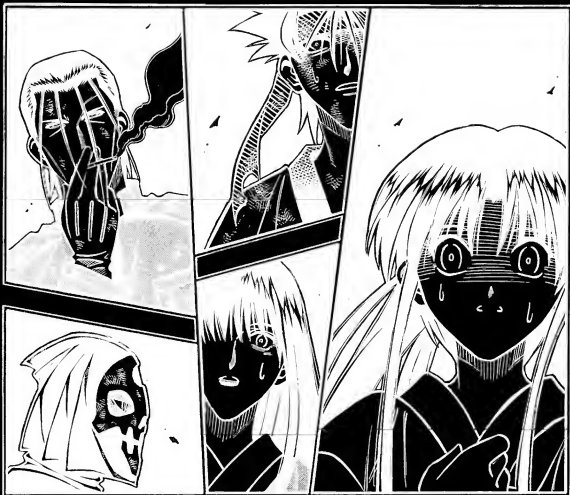
AMAKAKERU RYŪ
NO HIRAMEKI!!

Act 205

**The
True
Intent
of the
*Jinchū***

和月宏









HAA

IT WAS
CLOSER
THAN I
THOUGHT...

SEEP

...IF I HAD
BEEN AN
INSTANT
SLOWER, THAT
WOULD HAVE
BEEN A
DRAW...

I AM
ALSO
SOMEWHAT
SATISFIED.

YOU'RE
WELCOME.

I
APPRECIATE
IT, GEIN-SAN.
SEEING IT
ONCE WAS
EFFECTIVE.



WHY DIDN'T THE
VACUUM CREATED
BY THE FIRST
STRIKE AFFECT
HIM?!



WHY WAS
HIS SWORD
FASTER THAN
AMAKAKERU
RYU NO
HIRAMEKI?!

TMP

WHY...

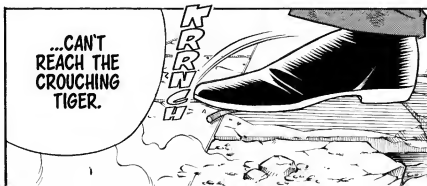


THAT BATTLE STANCE, CROUCHED
DOWN TO THE EARTH...THAT
ALLOWS HIM TO MAINTAIN HIS
OFFENSIVE STANCE BY USING
THE SUPPORT FROM THE EARTH
TO BEAR THE "SHOCKWAVE"
CREATED BY AMAKAKERU RYU
NO HIRAMEKI'S FIRST STRIKE.

FOOL.

IT DID
AFFECT
HIM...

AND BY USING THE
"SUCKING VACUUM" AS A
COUNTER METHOD, HE IS
ABLE TO DRIVE IN HIS
OWN SEMI-CIRCLE STRIKE
SOONER THAN THE FULL
CIRCLE OF THE SECOND
STRIKE.



...CAN'T
REACH THE
CROUCHING
TIGER.

EVEN THE
TALONS OF
A DRAGON
IN
FLIGHT...



YOU'RE GOOD.

YOU DETERMINED ALL THAT IN AN INSTANT.

TAP

BUT...

...IT'S ACTUALLY MUCH SIMPLER THAN THAT.



THE IMPORTANT PART IS THAT MY SISTER...

...SMILED ON ME.



PLIP PLIP

UH...

...GUH...

SO I
MERELY
RENDERED
YOU
IMMOBILE.

IT WOULD
DEFEAT THE
PURPOSE
TO FINISH
YOU OFF
HERE.

SEEP

HOW'S
THAT,
BATTOSAI
...

DOES THE
WOUND
YOU GAVE
MY SISTER
HURT?

BUT
SIS MUST
HAVE
HURT
MORE.

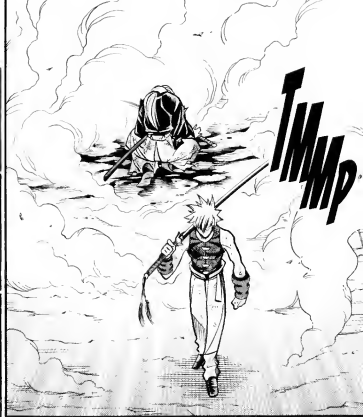
...THE
PREPARA-
TIONS
ARE
DONE.

NOW...

I AM
BEGINNING
...

...THE TRUE
JINCHŪ!





SO
NOW IT
IS MY
TURN...

WHOOOO



...TAKE
AWAY THE
PERSON
WHO IS
MOST
IMPORTANT
TO YOU!

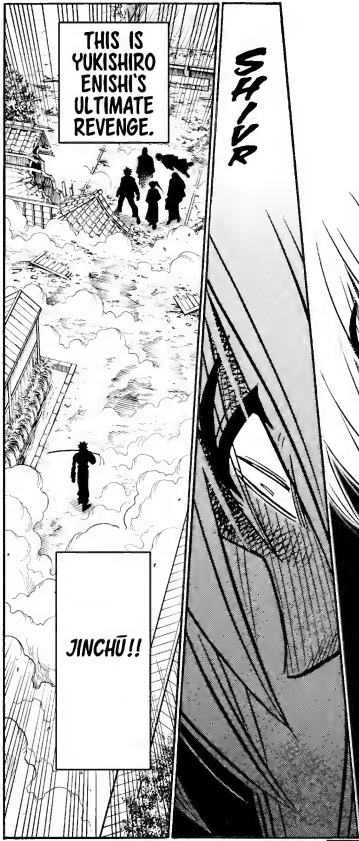
THIS
TIME,
I'LL...



...INTO A
"LIVING
HELL!"

CASTING
YOU
DOWN...





THIS IS
YUKISHIRO
ENISHI'S
ULTIMATE
REVENGE.

SHIR

JINCHŪ!!



YOU
FIEND!!

I
TOLD
YOU.

HE'S
COMING
HERE!

AAAAA
AH!



STOP...

HMM?



IF YOU END
UP DYING,
MY JINCHŪ
WILL BE...

YOU CAN
STILL GET
UP?

JUST
STAY
DOWN.

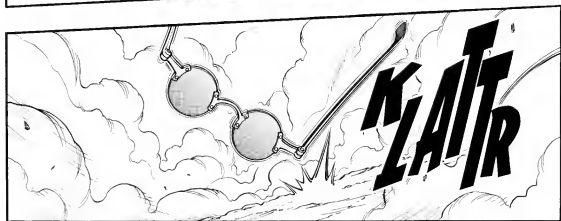


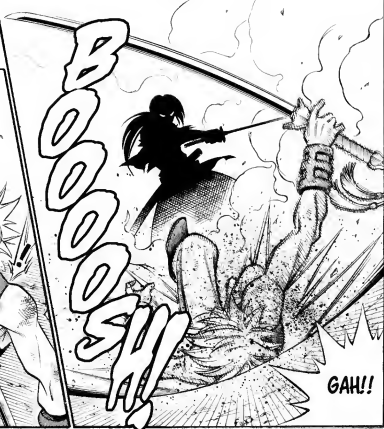
YOU'RE
ALL
ANNOY-
ING.

TMP

ALL BUT
KAMIYA
KAORU,
STEP
AWAY.

TMP





Act 206

**The
Clouded
Dark-
ness**







THAT'S
GREAT!

SPAT

HMPH...
"THAT
WILL
NOT BE
ALLOWED."
EH...



PTU
of
y

...THE
HARDER
HER LOSS
WILL HIT
Y—

THE MORE
YOU HEAT
UP TO
PROTECT
HER...



GAH!!!

THANKS!!!

WHAT!?

◀ READ
THIS WAY ▶



WHERE...DOES
HE KEEP SO
MUCH
STRENGTH...?



...ON
KAORU-
DONO!!



YOU
WILL NOT
LAY ONE
FINGER...

...ON
YOU, NO
MATTER
WHAT!!

I WILL
BRING
DOWN
JINCHŪ...

GRIT

SHUT UP...!







LET'S
GO,
SAITŌ!

WE'RE
GONNA SMACK
DOWN LITTLE
MISTER
SUNGLASSES!!

WE'RE
HELPING
KENSIN!

SHN

HEY,
HEY.

I
THOUGHT
THIS WAS
A DUEL
WITH NO
INTER-
FERENCE.



IDIOT
!!

ENISHI'S
FORGOT
THAT
RIGHT.

QUIT
BEING SO
STUPID!!



AH
WELL.

I DON'T
WANT THAT
YOUNGSTER
TAKING
MY MOST
ANTICIPATED
PREY.

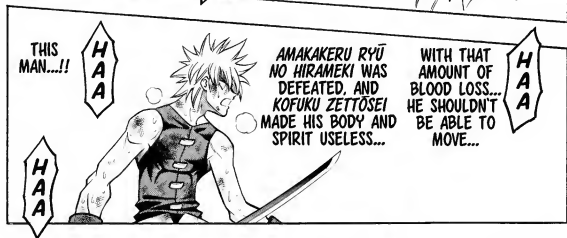
MY,
MY.
EVERYONE
IS SO
SELFISH.

FWOOO

I'LL
LET YOU
OWE ME
ONE.

TMP







H A A

GO TO
SLEEP,
ENISHI.

H A A

WHEN YOU
WAKE, YOU
WILL BE
TAUGHT OF
THE TRUTH
OF THE
SITUATION.

H A A

THIS IS
IMPOSSIBLE
!!

IT...
CAN'T BE...

H A A

UHH
UHH

H A A

H A A

YOU
UNDER-
STAND?

IF YOU
STILL DESIRE
TO AVENGE
TOMOE, I
WILL GLADLY
TAKE IT.

FWA

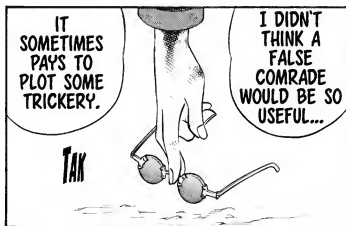
THEN,
CAST YOUR
JINCHŪ
ON ME!

REEE



...SALIIII
!!!!

BATTŌ...





STOP,
ENISHI!

...HAVE
FINALLY
SIDED
WITH MY
JINCHŪ.

IT SEEMS
LIKE THE
HEAVENS...

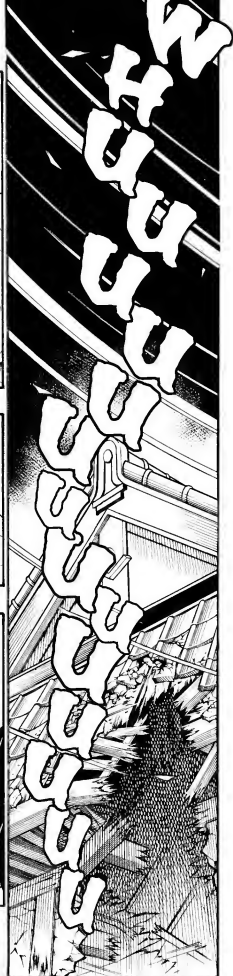


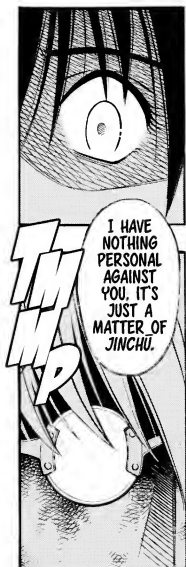
MAKE
SURE HE
DOESN'T
KILL YOU,
AND COME
BE THE
AUDIENCE
FOR THE
FINAL
ACT.

IT WILL
ALL BE
OVER IN
FOUR OR
FIVE
MINUTES.

ENISHI!!









YOU
WILL BE
SACRIFICED...
HERE AND
NOW!

GLOSSARY of the RESTORATION

A brief guide to select Japanese terms used in *Rurouni Kenshin*. Note that, both here and within the story itself, all names are Japanese style—i.e., last or “family” name first, with personal or “given” name following. This is both because *Kenshin* is a “period” story, as well as to decrease confusion—if we were to take the example of Kenshin’s sakabatō and “reverse” the format of the historically established assassin-name “Hitokiri Battōsai,” for example, it would make little sense to then call him “Battōsai Himura.”

Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū

Kenshin’s sword technique, used more for defense than offense. An “ancient style that pits one against many,” it requires exceptional speed and agility to master.

hitokiri

An assassin. Famous swordsmen of the period were sometimes thus known to adopt “professional” names—*Kawakami Gensai*, for example, was also known as “Hitokiri Gensai.”

Gatotsu

The signature move of Saitō Hajime, series creator Watsuki reportedly based his (fictional) version on an actual, historical, horizontal (or “flat”) sword-technique. There are four “types” of *Gatotsu*: *Isshiki*, *Nishiki*, and *Sanshiki* (Variants One, Two and Three), as well as *Gatotsu Zeroshiki*—the final technique which doubles or even triples the power of the original thrust.

Ishin Shishi

Loyalist or pro-Imperialist *patriots* who fought to restore the Emperor to his ancient seat of power

jinchū

Hitokiri were fond of the word *tenchū*, or “judgment from the heavens,” which expressed their belief that judgment lay in their hands. Enishi, on the other hand, calls his form of revenge *jinchū*, meaning that if the heavens won’t cast judgment on Kenshin, he will with his own brand of justice.

Amakakeru Ryū no Hirameki

Lit., “Heavens-Bridging Dragon Spark” (as in spark of “inspiration,” not “fire” or “flame”). Final or “succession” move of *Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū*, it incorporates everything Kenshin has been taught so far—including the overriding will to *live*. Also known as “Dragon Flight of Heaven.”

Bakumatsu

Final, chaotic days of the Tokugawa regime

-chan

Honorific. Can be used either as a diminutive (e.g., with a small child—“Little Hanako or Kentarō”), or with those who are grown, to indicate affection (“My dear...”).

-dono

Honorific. Even more respectful than *-san*; the effect in modern-day Japanese conversation would be along the lines of “Milord So-and-So.” As used by Kenshin, it indicates both respect and humility.

Edo

Capital city of the *Tokugawa Bakufu*; renamed *Tokyo* (“Eastern Capital”) after the Meiji Restoration

Himura Kenshin

Kenshin’s “real” name, revealed to Kaoru only at her urging

-san

Honorific. Carries the meaning of "Mr.," "Ms.," "Miss," etc., but used more extensively in Japanese than its English equivalent (note that even an enemy may be addressed as "-san").

shōgun

Feudal military ruler of Japan

shōgunate

See *Tokugawa Bakufu*

"Swift Death to Evil!"

Although there is some debate on who originated the term (some say it was the personal slogan of Saitō Hajime; others hold it to be a more general motto of the Shinsengumi itself), a more liberal translation of "*Aku • Soku • Zan*" might be "Evil unto Evil"...where, in this case, the "evil" would be beheading, or death.

tachi

Tachi are longer and more curved than *uchigatana*, and used from horseback. They were worn attached to the belt, blade down.

Tokugawa Bakufu

Military feudal government which dominated Japan from 1603 to 1867

Tokyo

The renaming of "*Edo*" to "*Tokyo*" is a marker of the start of the *Meiji Restoration*

uchigatana

Also known as katana, *uchigatana* or "striking swords" had predecessors in the Heian period, and became standard for foot soldiers during the Nambokuchō period. Unlike *tachi*, the *uchigatana* is worn through the sash, edge up.

Zipangu

Japan was once one of the foremost mining countries of the world. Marco Polo heard rumors of this land of gold (Zipangu, Cipango) while in China, and it is through his writings about the marvelous golden country that Europe was introduced to Japan.

Kawakami Gensai

Real-life, historical inspiration for the character of *Himura Kenshin*

karakuri

Intricately constructed mechanized dolls or automaton, *karakuri* were in many ways the predecessors of Japan's modern mechanical robots and devices

kenjutsu

The art of fencing; swords arts; *kendō*

-kun

Honorific. Used in the modern day among male students, or those who grew up together, but another usage—the one you're more likely to find in *Rurouni Kenshin*—is the "superior-to-inferior" form, intended as a way to emphasize a difference in status or rank, as well as to indicate familiarity or affection.

Kyoto

Home of the Emperor and imperial court from A.D. 794 until shortly after the *Meiji Restoration* in 1868

Meiji Restoration

1853-1868; culminated in the collapse of the *Tokugawa Bakufu* and the restoration of imperial rule. So called after Emperor Meiji, whose chosen name was written with the characters for "culture and enlightenment."

rurouni

Wanderer, vagabond

sakabatō

Reversed-edge sword (the dull edge on the side the sharp should be, and vice versa); carried by Kenshin as a symbol of his resolution never to kill again

-sama

Honorific. The respectful equivalent of *-san*, *-sama* is used primarily in addressing persons of much higher rank than one's self...or, in a romantic sense, in addressing those upon whom one is crushing, wicked hard.